

April 27, 2018 Meeting Minutes

City Operations and Organization Workgroup

Call to Order at 8:00 a.m.

Members present: Alderman Kelly Russell (chair), Debra Borden, Dana French, Josh Russin, Gayon Sampson

Absent: Carl Pritchard

Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 27, 2018, with no corrections.

Alderman Russell gave an update on the Open House held on April 16, 2018.

Interview of Bob Smith, Director of Parks and Recreation. He's been with the City for 22 years, first as a recreation supervisor. He became director 3 years ago. He has a great support team and staff. How many joint arrangements do we currently have with the County? We have joint arrangements at Whittier Elementary, TJ Middle School, Lincoln Elementary School, and the new ButterflyButterfly Ridge will be a site for the City to operate a recreation program. We have funding for a parks master plan and we will include an update of the departmental mission statement in that plan.

How involved are you with the NACs? Not as much as we should be. When there is an issue, we reach out to the NACs. It seems that the NACs are underutilized, do you agree that they may be able to help identify the recreation needs of the community? Yes, his department's work often seems very reactionary. He would like to get to a point where the department is more proactive.

Recreation can be a public health issue. He has been working on an initiative, Docs in the Park, and has recently picked up some including partners, including the Health Dept and Frederick Memorial Hospital.

How is the structure of the organization working for your department? Do you get enough access to the administration? Yes, the support and access to the administration is not an issue at all. Half of the department, the parks side, is very similar to a DPW operations department, but the recreation side is very different because it's people-focused. He doesn't have a good feeling about whether the current organizational structure would work well if the personalities didn't work so well together.

What's the policy for county residents' use of city facilities, is there reciprocity? We have a good relationship with County Parks and Recreation and we try to avoid duplication of services. We

provide discounts for city residents, with a few exceptions, but county residents are welcome to utilize our facilities. Generally the users are split 50/50 between city and county residents.

How do you feel about your staffing level? The City keeps growing and taking in parkland dedication. Our staff, however, is not growing. We will need more staff. He read though the number of various facilities they are responsible for. They have 25 full time parks and recreation employees, and several hundred part-time and seasonal employees. Full-time employees are much more expensive to the organization, mainly due to the benefits that part-time and seasonal employees don't receive.

Interview of Marc Stachowski, Deputy Director DPW Operations. He supervises 22 departments and 185 people. This takes a good bit of orchestration. DPW Operations functions as the maintenance department for city owned infrastructure. What's the overall shape of the infrastructure in the city? We have a very robust schedule of maintenance for the buried infrastructure. The downtown is always challenging, the storm system and the impact of repairing it is heavy. The buried infrastructure is all funded by dedicated funding streams - enterprise funding. Highway user fees have never been adequate to cover the maintenance requirements for our roads, so the fees end up representing a small part of the total funds necessary to actually address road maintenance ~~needs~~needs. We haven't done a good job of maintaining the street surfaces in the past, so it's hard to catch up with insufficient funding. This is not a staffing issue, just a money issue for road surfacing.

Are the elected officials aware of the dire projections? We make sure they are aware at least annually. He thinks his department operates at 80% efficiency, but their main job is to provide citizen's service. They do what needs to be done, which may be clearing trees one day, clearing snow another and paving a road the next day. They try to ~~strike~~strike a balance between the available staffing and the cost of materials, which are both dependent on funding.

Our bridges are another area of concern. We've partnered with the county on bridge inspections. Our in-house crews didn't have the equipment or expertise to do bridge repairs. They lobbied for an additional position in the street maintenance department and this year they are putting out an RFP for repair work on one of the bridges. If the inspection reveals that a bridge is failing, the state is notified and if necessary, the state will shut the bridge down. The City will need a comprehensive study of all bridge maintenance and repair needs.

What about succession planning? Are there positions in your department which could step into your job? He has a few folks that he has tried to bring along and give additional managerial mentoring. He gives his people the opportunity to present to the mayor and board, so that he rarely presents to the mayor and board. Has there been strong engagement with HR? He does think the new HR director has been open to interacting with the departments in ways that are helpful. He thinks HR is understaffed, but is headed in the right direction.

Impending doom? The City is running out of office space. Is there a plan? There is no facilities plan in effect currently which is designed to anticipate and ~~and~~ plan for the city's growth. In

order to prepare such a plan he would need either training or consultant services, as well as help from other departments like engineering, planning and DPW.

When new elected officials come in, they should get training and information on city operations. There is currently no framework for mayor and alderman orientation, the officials reach out on their own and some do not at all.

His department attends the NAC meetings when invited. He doesn't usually solicit input from the NACs unless there is a special project that lends itself to input in advance of the work.

Next steps:

Continue interviews with Directors

Public Guest/Comment: Phil LeBlanc

Meeting adjourned: 9:30 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Debra Borden